> *program instructions. These computer program instructions may be*
> *provided to a processor of a general purpose computer, special purpose*
> *computer, or other programmable data processing apparatus to produce a*
> *machine, such that the instructions, which execute via the processor of the*
> *computer or other programmable data processing apparatus, create*
> *structures for implementing the functions specified in the block diagram*
> *and/or flowchart block or blocks*. Each block, and combinations of blocks,
> can be implemented by servers which perform the specified functions or steps,
> or combinations of special purpose hardware and computer instructions.
>
> *These computer program instructions may also be stored in a*
> *computer-readable memory that can direct a computer or other*
> *programmable data processing apparatus to function in a particular*
> *manner, such that the instructions stored in the computer-readable memory*
> *produce an article of manufacture including instructions which implement*
> *the function specified in the block diagram and/or flowchart block or blocks.*
>
> *The computer program instructions may also be loaded onto a*
> *computer or other programmable data processing apparatus to cause a*
> *series of operational steps to be performed on the computer or other*
> *programmable apparatus to produce a computer implemented process or*
> *method such that the instructions which execute on the computer or other*
> *programmable apparatus provide steps for implementing the functions*
> *specified in the block diagram and/or flowchart block or blocks*. (Emphasis
> added).

The blocks in the flowchart illustrations of Figs. 2 and 3 apply to methods, systems for

implementing these methods, and computer program products containing operational steps for

implementing these methods on a computer or other programmable apparatus. Accordingly, all

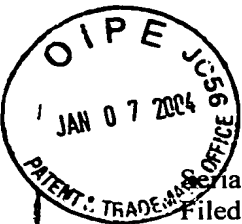claims (Claims 1-43) read on Figs. 2 and 3.

In addition, the Action states that restriction to one of the following inventions is

required under 35 U.S.C. § 121:

Group I: Claims 1-13;

Group II: Claims 14-28; or

Group III: Claims 29-43.

Applicants respectfully submit that they do not understand the purpose of this additional

restriction requirement. Claims 1-13 are method claims, Claims 14-28 are system claims, and

Claims 29-43 are computer program product claims. As set forth above, all claims (Claims 1-43

read on the flowchart illustrations of Figs 2 and 3 (Species A). Moreover, the nature of the

subject matter is such that it would enable the Examiner to search the claims of Groups I, II

and III together and that it would not create an undue hardship on the Examiner to do so. (See M.P.E.P. § 803).

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for substantive examination, which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Non-Fee Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Washington, DC 22313-1450, on January 5, 2004.

Michele P. McMahan   Date of Signature: January 5, 2004